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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/763,182	01/26/2004	Yohichiroh Matsuno	248143US2	6515
22850	7590	07/14/2008		
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314				
EXAMINER				
TIMBLIN, ROBERT M				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
2167				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
07/14/2008		ELECTRONIC		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10763,182

**Applicant(s)**

MATSUNO ET AL.

**Examiner**

ROBERT TIMBLIN

**Art Unit**

2167

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 March 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims pending in the application are 1,3-7,19-21,25,27-31,44,46,48,50,52,54,56,58,60,62-66,77-79,81,83-88,100,103,105,111,113,116,119 and 121.

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims rejected are 1,3-7,19-21,25,27-31,44,46,48,50,52,54,56,58,60,62-66,77-79,81,83-88,100,103,105,111,113,116,119 and 121.

**DETAILED ACTION**

This office action corresponds to application 10/763,182 filed 1/26/2004.

***Response to Amendment***

Applicant's amendments have been entered. In the amendment filed herein:

Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 63, 65, 77-79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 have been amended.

Claims 2, 26, and 124 have been cancelled.

Accordingly, claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 remain pending.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The previous 112 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph rejections are withdrawn.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

The previous 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections have been withdrawn. In light of the amendments and the present disclosure, the Examiner submits that the computer readable medium (supported by page 53 lines 4-6 as a hardware recording medium) as well as the processor (supported by page 53 line 15 as a CPU unit) included in the respective claims suffice as statutory subject matter.

***Claim Objections***

Claim 56 is objected to because of the following informalities: there is a repeated 'a' on lines 4 and 5 of the claims as a result of the amendment. Examiner requests the duplicate letter to be removed. Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McFadden (U.S. Patent Application 2003/0126137). In the cited paragraphs, figures and drawing references, McFadden teaches:

Claim 1 and similar claim 44: A merge information providing apparatus comprising:  
a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015);

means for receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

means for acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 3 and similar claim 27: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for acquiring only designated user information items acquires said designated user (0042) information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information (0012,

using an access control list) that permits the use of each of said plurality of user information providing means (paragraph 0064).

Claim 4 and similar claim 28: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information acquisition means for acquiring said first use permission information from each of said plurality of user information providing means (figures 5 and 8 and 0069; hub or spoke administrator authorization).

Claim 5 and similar claim 29: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing apparatus (0069-0073).

Claim 6 and similar claim 30: The merge information providing apparatus of the claim 5, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information (0030, 0178 and 0245).

Claim 7 and similar claims 31, 66, and 87: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge

information providing apparatus further comprises means for setting up each of said plurality of user information providing means according to a request (0060, 0062, 0067 and figure 5; creating a spoke).

Claim 19: An information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes

means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of different information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) that have been merged into a single information item in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032); and

a plurality of user information providing means (14, 16) that are subordinate (e.g. spokes used by a user) to said means for providing said plurality of different information items (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) and that include a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said plurality of different information items (0032, figure 7 and 0045) regarding said designated user (0015) that



have been merged into said single information item only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 20 : The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing means further comprises means for saving said plurality of different information items regarding said user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 21: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein said plurality of different information items regarding said user includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said user belongs, and wherein said group information includes user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0029, 0064, and figure 9).

Claim 25: A managing apparatus, comprising:

a merge information providing apparatus (12) including

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015);

means for transmitting a setup request (0010 and 0045; e.g. addition of a new user record) regarding a set up of each of said plurality of a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015), and

means for acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045).

Claim 44 : A merge information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition

request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 46: An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means and a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items (38, 46, 0064) regarding a plurality of users (0015), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus, said plurality of different information items (0032, figure 7 and 0045) regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of

information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045).

Claim 48: A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising the steps of:

means for acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups C;

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means (0045).

Claim 50 : A computer-implemented method for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including

a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 52: A computer-implemented method of providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means (e.g. user record) and a plurality of means for (38, 46, 0064) providing a plurality of user information items

regarding a plurality of users, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus (12), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064).

Claim 54: A computer-implemented method of managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means(0045).

Claim 56: A processor-readable medium storing program code that includes processor-executable instructions for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means

(38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 58: A processor-readable medium that includes processor-executable instructions for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising:

providing, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means (e.g. user record) and a plurality of means for (38, 46, 0064) providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus (12), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064).



Claim 60: A processor-readable medium storing program code that stores processor-executable instructions for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means(0045).

Claim 62: A merge information providing apparatus comprising:  
a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015);

means for acquiring a first designated user information item (0042; e.g. a user membership record in a particular spoke) regarding a designated user registered to a first one of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) of which use is permitted from among a said plurality of user information items, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

means for acquiring only a second designated user information item regarding the same said designated user registered to second one of said plurality user information item providing means (0009, 0013, and 0042; e.g. a user membership record in another particular spoke or group) from among said plurality of user information items, without distinguishing said designated user as to whether or not the use of said second one of said plurality user information item providing means is permitted; and

means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 63: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises:

means for managing distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to at least one of said plurality user information providing means from the rest of said plurality of users (0015 and 0032).

Claim 64: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 63, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to at least one of said first or second designated user information acquisition means in response to a request from said at least one of said first or second designated user information acquisition means (0056, identifying group membership).

Claim 65: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said first and second designated user information acquisition means acquires said first and second designated user information items regarding said designated user from said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means (0069, drawing reference 218).

Claim 77: An information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

means for providing only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user information providing means corresponding to a distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to said designated user information (0015 and 0032) providing means and/or registered to a plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users providing means to a merge user information providing apparatus in response to a request from said merge user information providing apparatus (12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said designated user information items providing means and other said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records).

Claim 78: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing apparatus further

comprises: means for saving said designated information items regarding said designated user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 79: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein said designated information items regarding said designated user includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said designated user belongs, said group information including designated user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0029, 0064, and figure 9).

Claim 81 : The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 78, wherein said designated user information items providing means further comprises means for saving said designated user information regarding said designated user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 83: A managing apparatus, comprising: a processor; and a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus includes

a merge information providing apparatus (12) including a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015);

means for transmitting information regarding set up of said plurality of user information items providing means (figure 1 and 0045); and

means for acquiring only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) being registered to other at least two of said plurality of user information providing means (e.g. a user registered to two spokes) without distinguishing (0081, 38) the designated user by the user information providing means of which use is permitted, said merge information providing apparatus merging said acquired different designated user information items regarding said designated user (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) into a single merged designated user item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 84: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus further comprises means for managing distinction information that distinguishes whether said designated user is registered to at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0056).

Claim 85: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to said

user information acquisition means in response to a request from said user information acquisition means (0056, identifying group membership).

Claim 86: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said designated user information items (0042) regarding said designated user from said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said plurality of user information providing means (0069, drawing reference 218).

Claim 88: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus

further comprises means for displaying a screen for setting up said merge information providing apparatus and said plurality of user information providing means (0050).

Claim 100: A merge user information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from among said plurality of user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion)

registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 103: An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the step of:

providing in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said plurality of user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or



membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (figure 1).

Claim 105: A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired plurality of different user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045).

Claim 111: A computer-implemented information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the step of:

providing only, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1, #12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said plurality of user information items providing means (figure 1, 16, 14), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing mean for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (0032, figure 7 and 0045).

Claim 113: A computer-implemented managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (abstract, 0015);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045).

Claim 116: A processor-readable medium storing a program code for providing merge user information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members

that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted (e.g. a user registered at a spoke computer/domain), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

Claim 119: A processor-readable medium for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the step of:

providing only, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1, #12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said plurality of user information items providing means (figure 1, 16, 14), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said

plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing mean for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (0032, figure 7 and 0045).

Claim 121: A processor-readable medium for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from among said plurality of user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045).

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed in the reply dated 3/31/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's key argument, found on pages 31-39, is that the McFadden reference fails to teach the claimed feature of acquiring only designated user information items regarding a designated user (e.g. first paragraph, page 32 of the reply). The Examiner respectfully disagrees given the following:

In a new interpretation of the previously applied McFadden reference, the Examiner submits that the aforementioned claim feature is taught and described by McFadden.

Generally, McFadden discloses the updating and maintenance of dynamic groups. The users to be included into those dynamic groups must meet a membership criterion in order to be incorporated into the group (e.g. see McFadden, abstract and 0015). That is, McFadden explicitly recites the set of member identifiers identifies those user from a plurality of users that meet the group membership criterion. In a reasonable interpretation of the present invention's use of the broadly defined *designated user*, the Examiner submits that McFadden similarly

teaches a designated user. That is, a user that may be incorporated into a dynamic group is effectively *designated* for inclusion into that group. Likewise, when that user is included into the group, their membership group identifiers (e.g. 0045) are updated to reflect such an inclusion. Moreover, the Examiner submits that once a new (designated) user is included into a dynamic group, that their information items, such as their name, membership identifiers, groups that they are involved in, etc. are accordingly acquired for updating so that their records reflect the modifications. Further, their memberships to different groups are reflected in the user's record (e.g. McFadden 0045) to describe that a membership to various groups are merged into a single user record (i.e. a user's record signifies a single user information item that includes acquired group memberships that the user is involved in – see figure 7, drawing references 102, 104 as well for a view of a user record and included fields).

In another interpretation, the Examiner submits that in McFadden's system of synchronizing user information, a user that has been modified or changed may also be seen as a *designated* user. That is, the user (and their corresponding record) are designated for updating. Moreover, if a user is updated in a database, it is reasonably seen that the designated user with their designated user information items are likely acquired and updated as well to effect the synchronization.

In final remarks, the Examiner submits that as the argued limitation including *acquiring only designated user items* is broad in scope and thus open to multiple interpretations, that this feature is not patentable over the McFadden reference. Further arguments are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

### **Relevant Prior Art**

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Swift et al. U.S. Patent 5,768,519. The subject matter disclosed therein pertains to the pending claims (i.e. merging user information items).

### ***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.



**Contact Information**

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert M. Timblin whose telephone number is 571-272-5627. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John R. Cottingham can be reached on 571-272-7079. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ROBERT TIMBLIN/

Examiner, Art Unit 2167

/John R. Cottingham/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2167